

TITLE OF THE INVENTION

DEVICE FOR TEMPERING ROLLED STOCK OF GREAT LENGTH

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Device for Tempering Rolled Stock of Great Length

The invention relates to a device for the hardening of rolling stock having a large lengthwise extension at a high throughput. More precisely defined, the invention relates to a device for the thermal tempering of at least portions of the cross section over the lengthwise extension of sequentially produced profiled rolling stock from the rolling heat, in particular for hardening at least the head of rails having a length greater than 50 m, and subsequent cooling to room temperature, consisting essentially of a roller table, a means for arranging the rolling stock in axial alignment, a transport means having a rest for the rolling stock for the transport thereof in transverse direction, a hardening device with a manipulation arrangement, and a cooling bed.

In order to improve the properties of the material, a rolling stock is usually subjected to a thermal tempering treatment that advantageously is carried out with the use of the rolling heat. This tempering, which essentially affords an increase in the mechanical properties of the material such as hardness, abrasion resistance, and the like, can be performed over the entire cross section or, as is common with a running rail, only over partial sections of the same. Here, the rolling stock which is in its austenitic microstructural state, or partial sections of the cross section of the same, is dipped into a cooling medium over its entire length and, in this manner, a transformation of the microstructure is achieved in the desired manner.

Devices for carrying out such tempering processes are known (EP-0441766 B1) and have proven suitable with regard to an improvement of the use properties of railroad rails.

Depending on the final rolling temperature and depending on the specific mass or mass per length unit, respectively, of the rolling stock, thermal tempering thereof requires a corresponding submersion time or residence time in the cooling liquid, such that the throughput through the tempering device is limited. In other words, the maximum possible throughput through a submersion tempering installation with a cooling basin limits the output of the rolling device arranged before it.

Modern roll-forming lines with prearranged heating furnaces particularly for continuous casting input stock usually have potential rolling outputs that are greater than the throughput of known submersion tempering installations, so that with a sequential production of hardened rails, the rolling output has to be reduced.

In order to avoid this disadvantage, which is in particular an economic one, it has already been recommended to temper the rolling stock as it moves through a cooling path provided with spraying means. However, this continuous pass process requires long lengths of the installation and usually does not result in the required material quality of the rolling stock.

The invention aims at avoiding the deficiencies and, in particular, the economic disadvantages, of known thermal treatment installations for rolling stock of the type mentioned at the outset and at providing a device that ensures a high quality and good use properties of the rolling stock produced and has a high output and renders possible the treatment and thermal tempering of sequentially produced bar stock, particularly of rails having lengths of more than 50 m, on roll lines with high output while using rolling heat.

5 This goal is attained in a generic device in that the roller table has a device for longitudinally positioning the rolling stock which is supplied supported in at least one cross-sectional region, and an assigned alignment means, in that the hardening device is formed of at least two liquid cooling devices arranged next to one another essentially parallel in their lengthwise direction to the alignment means with manipulators for a movement of the rolling stock, in that the deposit region of the cooling bed is located next to, and parallel to the lengthwise extension of, the liquid cooling devices, and in that the means for transport in transverse direction has at least two supporting arms that are simultaneously movable between the roller table rolls, each having rolling stock rests arranged on the end side, that 10 these rests on the supporting arms can be moved in transverse direction from the alignment position in the region of the roller table into the deposit region of the cooling bed, lowered, and raised in such a way that exclusively the rests protrude beyond the transport surface of the roller table and the upper edge of the roller table, respectively.

15 The advantages attained by the invention lie especially in the fact that, using the device, it is possible to position and axially align the rolling stock in a simple manner in sequence in the transverse transport region of the roller table with a high degree of precision, it being possible, by means of the rolling stock rests of the means for transport in transverse direction, to simultaneously, i.e., without interfering with the adjustment and the axial alignment process, transport a previously aligned and provided piece of rolling stock into the 20 deposit regions of the cooling devices or from there into the deposit region of the cooling bed or from the roller table directly onto the cooling bed. In this connection, it is important that only the rolling stock rests of the supporting arms of the means for transport in transverse direction, which arms are movable between the rolls, are capable of being raised above the upper level of the rolls of the roller table or their transport surface, respectively. With this 25

embodiment of the device, it is possible to arrange at least two hardening devices on one side of the roller table such that a cooling bed must be provided on one side only, which yields economic advantages. A piece of rolling stock that is positioned on the roller table and axially aligned can be lifted off the roller table by means of the rests of the supporting arms and, for example, be laid down in a deposit region of a liquid cooling device that is embodied as a manipulator. Thereafter the means for transport in transverse direction is freed up for transporting further pieces of rolling stock, where the manipulator can, alone and independently, orient the deposited rolling stock in its cross-sectional position, place it in the cooling medium at least partially, lift it out, and provide it for transport to the cooling bed. This separation of the transport in transverse direction of the rolling stock, which is essential to the invention, even past occupied cooling devices with, eventually, a deposit on the cooling bed, and a precise placement of the rolling stock in the cooling medium improves the precision of the manipulation as well as of the cooling treatment and reliably affords hardened rolled products with consistently high quality. In an advantageous and economical manner, the output and throughput, respectively, of the device is approximately doubled when using two hardening devices next to one another.

If the device is intended for a rolling stock in the form of a running rail or a railroad rail that rests on the roller table in two cross-sectional regions and the positioning device is embodied as an electronically controllable means and/or has an alignment bar or a lateral stop, it is possible in a favorable fashion for the residence time of the rails on the roller table to be reduced, for the temperature control to be improved, and, optionally, for the output of the installation to be increased. Moreover, this position is particularly well suited for a so-called "head down" vertical positioning of the rail by means of the manipulators.

If, as may be provided in one embodiment of the invention, the liquid cooling devices are formed as submersion basins that have horizontally and vertically oriented stops acting on the bottom and, optionally, laterally for leveling and aligning the rolling stock, it is possible, in particular in the case of the cooling of parts of the cross section of a rail, for a highly consistent cooling and distribution of hardness to be achieved over its length, which helps to ensure the quality of the product.

It is advantageous for consistent and good use properties if holding-down means for the rolling stock, in particular for a rail, are provided in the device, with which means the rolling stock/rail can be pressed down against the leveling stops in the submersion basin during cooling because this can effectively prevent a bending caused by the cooling and keep the respective local cooling of the surface completely constant.

Particular economic advantages are provided by using the device described above for hardening at least the head of rails having a length of greater than 50 m and subsequent cooling to room temperature at a pass-through time of a rail through the hardening device that exceeds the supply frequency because large increases in performance are possible at comparably low investment costs.

In the following, the invention will be described with reference to a drawing which shows one embodiment only, with the reference characters, each of which is kept the same, being listed below.

List of Reference Characters:

	S	Rolling stock
	1	Roller table
5	11	Transport surface of the roller table
	2	Alignment means
	21	Alignment bar
	3	Hardening device
	31	Liquid cooling devices
10	32	
	311	Manipulators
	321	
	312	Submersion basins
	322	
15	313	Leveling stops
	323	
	314	Holding-down means
	324	
	315	Cooling liquid
20	325	
	4	Cooling bed
	41	Deposit region of the cooling bed
	5	Means for transport in transverse direction
	51	Supporting arm
25	52	Rolling stock rest

Fig. 1 shows a device according to the invention with a hardening device 3 consisting of two liquid cooling devices 31 and 32 that are arranged between a roller table 1 and a cooling bed 4. In the exemplary schematic depiction, the head of the rail S is shown submerged in a cooling liquid 315 in one of the liquid cooling devices 31. By means of holding-down means 314 and leveling stops 313, the rail can be positioned in a submersion basin 312 in such a way that precisely only an accelerated head cooling of the same takes place. However, using stops 313 positioned farther below the surface of a cooling liquid 315, it is also possible to cool the entire cross section of the rail in an accelerated manner. A second liquid cooling device 32 stands ready.

As Fig. 1 further shows, a rail S coming from a line of rollers (not shown) is positioned on the roller table 1 and can be arranged with its axis aligned by means of an alignment means 2 optionally having an alignment bar 21. A means 5 for transport in transverse direction with supporting arms 51 and one rolling stock rest 52 each is arranged such that it can be moved back into the region of the roller table 1. However, it is also possible to establish such a means 5 for transport in transverse direction in the region of the cooling bed.

For transport in transverse direction, a simultaneous displacement of the supporting arms 51 is carried out in such a way that the rolling stock rests 52 arranged thereon, when raised, can lift the rail S off the roller table 1 in an axially aligned manner, carry it, and move it transversely in the direction of the cooling bed 4. Here, it is essential to the invention that, in the course of a transport in transverse direction, exclusively the rolling stock rests 52 of the means 5 for transport in transverse direction can vertically protrude above a transport surface 11 of the roller table, even if the deposits 52 are moved into the outermost opposing

region, for example, when placing a rail S on a deposit region 41 of the cooling bed 4.

5 A positioned and axially aligned rail S, which lies on the transport surface 11 of the roller table 1, advantageously in two cross-sectional regions, can now be vertically lifted in this position by means of the rolling stock rest 52 and be moved essentially horizontally or transversely to a stand-by liquid cooling device in Fig. 1, item 32. Such a cross-sectional position of the rail S on the rolling stock rests 52 is favorable for reception of the same and a "head down" vertical positioning by means of a manipulator 321, by means of which a lowering or introduction of the rail head into a cooling liquid 325 can be carried out as well. 10 During the residence time of the rail in the cooling liquid 325, the rail can be clamped by means of holding-down means 324 and leveling stops 323 for the purpose of stabilization.

15 Because, as previously mentioned, according to the invention, exclusively the rolling stock rests 52 can be brought to a level that lies above the transport surface 11 of the roller table 1, it is possible, despite transverse transport activities, to bring a subsequent rail from the rolling works onto the roller table 1 and to position and align it thereon. The removal of a rail S from the liquid cooling devices 31, 32 by means of manipulators 311, 321 and a taking off thereof by means of the rolling stock rests 52 can be carried out in essentially the same manner, whereupon a transport and deposit onto the deposit region 41 of the cooling 20 bed 4 take place.

25 In the case of high rolling output, the hardening device 3 can also be equipped with more than two liquid cooling devices, but a programmable control unit may advantageously be used for a production sequence.